4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

whole community lavishly entertained. The guests were entertained at the intendancy. After dinner, 400 taels instead of 500 taels were presented to the parents. Then the guests, bursting with righteous indignation, started cursing the intendancy and a feverish discussion broke up in a violent wrangle. In the scurry and confusion and unexpected hurly burly, all the lamas of the monastery and the intendants arrived to patch up the trouble. The 500 taels were paid. After ten years I heard the people of Li-chia-t'ai still cursing the intendancy.

In 1894 the intendancy of T'u-kuan got into trouble over its last incarnation. A lama boy, seven years of age, who lived at the lamasery of Ku-ch'eng which belonged to the Lu T'u-ssu, was recognized as the incarnation of T'u-kuan. Lu T'u-ssu, the lamas of Ku-ch'eng, the family of the boy, and the entire village objected, and did not allow the boy to abandon the monastery without having the intendancy pay 5,000 taels to the family. The most influential mediators were invited by Erh-ku-lung in order to find a compromise. Sheep and cows were killed every day, plenty of wine distilled, and lamas and the whole village had a wonderful time enjoying dinners and drinks for ten days. Finally the compromise was reached that 3,600 taels should be paid to the family and various gifts offered to the T'u-ssu, the intendancy of Ku-ch'eng, the members of the family, and the mediators. The intendancy of T'u-kuan, which was known all over the country to be rich and wealthy, the lamas, the whole of Ku-ch'eng, and the family of the new incarnation, thus seized the opportunity to share in their own way a part of the honor befallen to Erh-ku-lung by discovery of the reincarnation.

It happens, however, that once in a while the horoscope seems to be cast in the wrong way. A nephew of T'u-kuan, two years of age, was recognized to be the incarnation of the minor Living Buddha Kao of Ch'ie-bzan. At five years of age, upon the death of his parents, he was taken to the intendancy, but seemed to be an idiot. In 1918, at thirty years of age, he was still only allowed to leave the intendancy once a month, in order to climb the mountain to the Obo and to burn incense.

## EDUCATION OF THE MONGUOR LIVING BUDDHAS

Usually at the age of seven or eight the new Living Buddha is brought to the lamasery, led by a splendid procession of lamas, and installed in the luxurious intendancy, where a group of lama servants scrape and fawn in his presence, cater to his whims, and do his bidding.

The Orient is the country of decorum; the traditional splendor of the oriental courts is proverbial. The Living Buddhas of all the sects are extremely fond of decorum, and try to impress the uncivilized people by a display of munificence and wealth. For this reason

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

even minor Living Buddhas live in luxurious residences, with a private chapel and servants. Admittance to the Living Buddha is very complicated; no one is even allowed to enter the kitchen, at the entrance of which, when the Living Buddha is present, is a high stone, whitewashed and covered with a ceremonial scarf.

The first duty of the intendant is to acquire for his new master two lama teachers of good repute and extensive learning, in order to provide for the education of the pupil. The first lessons consist of training the boy, grooming him for a big throne, to handle the protocol, as one to the manner born. The new pupil, clad in shining garments of embroidered silk, has to learn again and again to proceed with a stately, measured tread to his throne, which is draped with silk of royal yellow; to sit down gracefully, adjusting his clothes decently, and wearing a professional smile. He has to be trained by constant repetition to handle with elegance the stick with tufted end, and with solemnity to touch with it the heads of adoring pilgrims, nodding his head at the same time and smiling with calmness and serenity.

An old master told me that it takes weeks and weeks before a pupil sits well in the saddle, and that after months and months the exercises always have to be repeated, because, he said, the dignity of the pupil and the repute of the master are involved. At the same time, he said, the teacher has to instill in the pupil the idea of the eminence of his state in life, to make him conscious that the people adore him and that he really can procure the salvation of all beings. He has to explain his illustrious pedigree in order to enhance in him the sense of his dignity.[25]

No wonder that travelers meeting Living Buddhas, particularly young Living Buddhas, are impressed by the serious omnipotent look on their faces. It is a common saying that all Orientals are born actors, and the joke is well known, "Dress a beggar with the clothes of a governor of a province, and he will immediately play his role to the peak of perfection." Living Buddhas, however, receive an intensive training.

The little Living Buddha then starts reading and writing, memorizing texts and repeating them before his masters, who inflict corporal punishment when he fails to measure up to their expectations. The master, after punishing the pupil, kneels before him and apologizes for having been compelled to mete out punishment to so eminent a Living Buddha. It would seem that Living Buddhas, like ordinary lamas, are not very interested in poring over books and racking their brains over philosophical problems. The last T'u-kuan, born in 1894, had two masters, one from Erh-ku-lung and one sent by his friend the Living Buddha of Labrang. The master from Labrang, after some years, gave up all hope of making a learned man of his pupil, and packed

[25] Schuyler Cammann, *The land of the camel*, 79, 80, 94, New York, Ronald Press, 1950. Rynhart, *op. cit.*, 127, 128.

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

with a burning ram's horn. He was carried outside the monastery wall by lamas. Ashes were spread all the way along in order to prevent his "spirit" from finding the way back to harm the lamasery. A large group of lamas followed. He was thrown on the ground, stripped of all his garments, amid the shouts of the lamas and the long blare of trumpets, and the group returned to the monastery without looking back. A round mark is burned on thieves. It is impossible for those so marked to enter any monastery.

At the time of the festival at Erh-ku-lung in 1912, three young lamas molested a young lady, causing her death. They fled the same night. The whole village of Too-long accused the monastery at Hsining, which was unable to trace the murderers and had to pay an indemnity of 3,000 taels, after spending far more at court. The whole country was bursting with righteous indignation. It was a tremendous loss of face for the lamasery.

Lamas not only lack the vow of obedience, but also the vow of poverty. It has been explained how lamas retain their own wealth and the means they use for increasing it.[27] Among the lamas are rich individuals enjoying a happy life, possessing a beautiful courtyard, clothed with silk and brocade, riding the finest horses and mules of the country, served by as many lamas as they wish, and there are poor individuals who have trouble making both ends meet—ill fed, ill clothed, working the whole day. Nobody takes care of them because wealth is a personal matter, and no vow of poverty exists. It has been explained how the lack of the vow of poverty is responsible in a large part for the loss of spirit in the monastic life, and how from this lack originate most of the vices encountered among the lamas and the ruination of monasteries.

Lamas lack the vow of chastity, for chastity reaches farther than celibacy. The Buddhists know this very well and the texts prove it.[28]

The reform of Tsong-khapa, the founder of the Yellow Sect, aimed at return to the traditional monastic life, based on celibacy and serious study. The sense of the necessity of celibacy still seems to prevail among the Monguor lamas. This assumption seems evidenced by the facts that the communities of lamas bring suit at Chinese courts against even supreme chiefs of lama-series, and intendants who betray their vows, as was the case with the Living Buddhas Sumpa, Lu-chia, and Min-chu-erh, and even with Li, the intendant of the T'u-kuan Hutukhtu. It was the same with the Living Buddha Seerting who was caught red-handed by the

[27] The wealth possessed by a lama, his courtyard, etc. are inherited by his apprentice; in case he dies without having an apprentice, his wealth is sold by the intendancy; prayers are said by the lamas and alms given to them. If a lama who is proprietor of a courtyard marries, his courtyard is taken by the intendancy.

[28] L. de la Vallée Poussin, *Morale bouddhique*, 79. Paris, Librairie Nationale, 1927.

5:Schram M-5 (1911-1922)1961 AE9 Monguor AE9
Historical Mongolia AH2

Chuang-lang, Ch'ing-yang, and East Kansu. The raids furnished to the invaders a considerable amount of loot and fostered their predatory instincts. The example set by the Mongols whetted the appetite for plunder among the Tibetan tribes also. The people lived in desperate conditions, and the t'u-ssu troops had always to be ready to comply with the orders of military commanders.

This note, recorded in the Lu chronicles, is quite acceptable for the reason that during just these years a tremendous confusion reigned in Mongolia, and the Mongol tribes located along the Kanchow and Liang-chow borders had nobody to care for them, for the Oirats, now at the summit of their power, had thought themselves strong enough to challenge the Chinese empire.

## HEIGHT OF OIRAT HEGEMONY

To Esen, the powerful Oirat chief, had been promised an imperial princess by the eunuch Wang Chen, the favorite of the emperor. He had not notified the emperor of this promise and when the envoys of Esen arrived at court with the nuptial presents they were refused. In the autumn of 1449 the humiliated Esen began raids on the empire frontiers and approached Ta-t'ung. An army of half a million men was raised in a hurry, and sent against the Oirats. The emperor accompanied the army. His troops were routed, the emperor was taken prisoner, the remnants of the army tumbled back to Peking, and the capital was in jeopardy. Ching Ti, the brother of Emperor Ying Tsung, ascended the throne in 1450. The Oirats were unable to seize the capital. After endless deliberations, the released imperial prisoner reentered Peking in the eighth moon, after an absence of one year.

Esen, swollen with pride after his resounding victory over the empire, his ambition soaring to the throne, proclaimed himself emperor of the Mongols in 1454; but two of his commanders revolted against him in 1455, he fled and was killed the same year. For the time being the balance of political power of the Oirats shifted to the eastern Mongols who struggled again for the hegemony. One of the commanders who had killed Esen was killed by Polai, a tribal chieftain of the Ta-tan Mongols. Po-lai enthroned a new Khan, Markorgis, the son of T'o-to-pu-hua, known under the name of Hsiao-wang-tsu, the little king, and began with raids on the frontiers of the empire.[80]

In 1457 Emperor Ching Ti fell ill, the secluded Yin Tsung ascended the throne for the second time and thereafter his brother died.

## T'U-SSU LI WEN

The same year T'u-ssu Li Wen arrived at Peking from Hsining with his army, to congratulate Yin Tsung

[80] H. Serruys, *op. cit.*, 85; Pokotilov, *op. cit.*, 58-60.